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COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Community seeks creation of a Community Oversight Board to address potential abuses of police authority

Latino community asks to participate in selection of Yakima Police Chief

The collection of ethnic and racial data during traffic stops would help reduce the potential of profiling against the Latino community.

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Olympia, WA, September 18, 2002.

At the September 14, 2002 Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) public meeting, a group of Yakima community advocates and representatives discussed the need for effective measures to reduce the amount of discrimination by police against Hispanics in Yakima.

The request for several effective measures to combat perceived discrimination by police occurred at the Commission's regular bimonthly public meeting, held at *Washington Middle School* in Yakima.

Present at the meeting were CHA commissioners and staff, Hector Franco, representing Latinos for Social Justice; Reuel Paradis, Region Five administrator for Labor and Industries; José Rodríguez, Spanish Language Communications Manager for L&I; city council member John Puccinelli; interim police chief for the city of Yakima, Roy Wilson; a group of representatives from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; representatives of local health and education agencies; as well as community members and journalists for local and statewide media.

In testimony at the meeting, Hector Franco, on behalf of Latinos for Social Justice, supported the creation of a local community oversight board that would be comprised of representatives of all sectors of the Yakima community. This impartial board, according to Mr. Franco, would be able to study and investigate any complaints against City of Yakima Police, complaints that could include mistreatment, abuse of authority, and discrimination against Hispanics. Also suggested was the collection of ethnic and racial data during all traffic stops. This statistical study of stops would be able to determine and deter disproportionate stops or ticketing of Hispanic drivers.

Another measure suggested to improve the relationship between the police and the Yakima community was the need for community input in the hiring process for the city's new police chief. This position is currently held by interim chief Roy Wilson. Council member John Puccinelli indicated in his address to the Commission that such a proposal has been considered but that the hiring process is still in its early stages and not yet at the stage at which community input would be required.

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